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psychiatry and sacred texts

## The Qur'an, Chapter 93: The Morning Hours

## Ibtesham T. Hossain

The Qur'an is compiled of 114 chapters delving into a multitude of existential themes which provide the perfect ingredients for a human psyche – influencing the emotions, thoughts and behaviour of over a billion people worldwide.

Chapter 93, in combination with its context, is of particular interest from a psychiatric point of view because it provides a framework for overcoming depression. The opening verse begins with an oath, 'By the morning brightness' (verse 1) referring to the early part of the day as being a time of activity and full of life, directing a person's mind to positive thoughts. This is followed by 'And by the night when it grows still' (verse 2), implying that the stillness of the night provides calmness, the juxtaposition of the verses highlighting the contrasting emotions a person faces during the day and night. 'Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor does He hate you' (verse 3) – powerfully provides a sense of belonging and dispels the notion of helplessness.

The closing verses then describe how a person's situation can be changed regardless of their circumstances, inducing a sense of control through reliance and gratitude, all coming together to foster the take-home message – hope.

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